

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A vehicle steering apparatus comprising:

a housing for supporting coaxially ~~[[to]]~~ a steering shaft and a rotating cylinder, said rotating cylinder being provided with a screw mechanism constructed between said rotating cylinder and said steering shaft for moving in an axial direction for the purpose of steering and being rotated by a transmission from a steering motor, said ~~steering motor~~ housing being constructed in a separated form consisting of first and second housings, said first and second housings being fit to each other by a spigot-joint fitting on an outer side of a retaining part of a thrust bearing for thrust-supporting said rotating cylinder,

wherein a gap is provided in a part that constitutes a part of the spigot-joint fitting part of said first and second housings and that is located on an outer side of a fixing nut screwed into said retaining part in order to apply a tightening force on said thrust bearing from one side, and

wherein said gap that constitutes a part overlaps, in an axial direction, with a screwing region between said retaining part and said fixing nut screwed into said retaining part.

2. (Currently Amended) The vehicle steering apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said screw mechanism is a ball screw mechanism and said ball screw mechanism is constructed by engaging via a large number of balls, and such that a screw groove ~~[[is]]~~ formed in an outer periphery of said steering shaft ~~engaging is engaged~~ with a screw groove formed in an inner periphery of said rotating cylinder via a large number of balls.

3. (Previously Presented) The vehicle steering apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising an escape stopping ring, said escape stopping ring being in contact with an end face of said fixing nut from an opposite side of said thrust bearing.

4. (Original) The vehicle steering apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said thrust bearing is a twin angular contact ball bearing having a common outer race tightened by said fixing nut.

5. (Original) The vehicle steering apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said thrust bearing is a shield bearing provided with a shield member on both sides of rolling elements.

6. (Original) The vehicle steering apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said rotating cylinder has, in an outer periphery, a gear wheel that engages with a pinion of an output shaft of said steering motor.

7. (Original) The vehicle steering apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said gear wheel has resin gear teeth.

8. (Canceled).